

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1395

INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 0706

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECRP, ENRG, SF

SUBJ: CERP: PETROLEUM STATISTICS, SOUTH AFRICA

REF: (A) STATE A-8736, NOVEMBER 21, 1974

(B) PRETORIA A-101'; MAY 9, 1974

(C) CERP 4250

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. AS REPORTED IN PRETORIA'S REPAIR, PETROLEUM STATISTICS IN SOUTH AFRICA REMAIN SUBJECT TO MILITARY SECURITY REGULATIONS AND ARE NOT OBTAINABLE, ESPECIALLY IN THE DETAILED FORMAT REQUESTED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTION.

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2. THE EMBASSY REQUESTED ITS CONSTITUENT POSTS TO MAKE CONFIDENTIAL APPROACHES TO THE AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA TO LEARN IF THERE WERE ANY CHANGES IN DATA AVAILABILITIES SINCE THE PRETORIA REPAIR. THEY HAVE REPLIED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NONE. THE REASON FOR THE SECRECY POLICY LIES IN THE BOYCOTT BY THE ARAB STATES OF SUPPLIES TO SOUTH AFRICA AND IN
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SOUTH AFRICAN EFFORTS TO OBTAIN SUPPLIES NEVERTHELESS, AN

EFFORT IN WHICH THE INTERNATIONAL MAJORS APPEAR TO BE COOPERATING.

3. THUS, WHILE WE CANNOT SUPPLY THE PRECISE DATA REQUESTED, THE FOLLOWING MAY BE HELPFUL:

(A) WE CONTINUE TO ESTIMATE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSUMPTION AT ABOUT 300,000 BARRELS PER DAY;

(B) ITS MAJOR CRUDE SUPPLIER IS IRAN; SOME HAS BEEN COMING ALSO FROM IRAQ, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER HAS, IT IS UNDERSTOOD, BEEN PRESSING SOUTH AFRICA TO TAKE REFINED PRODUCTS RATHER THAN CRUDE;

(C) WHILE THE GASOLINE CONSERVATION MEASURES EARLIER REPORTED REMAIN IN EFFECT, NO SHORTAGES HAVE DEVELOPED FOR CONSUMERS AT THE RETAIN OUTLETS.

(D) SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE STATISTICS FOR 1972, VS FOR LAST FULL YEAR FOR WHICH FIGURES ON PETROLEUM IMPORTS WERE PUBLISHED, SHOW IMPORTS OF CRUDE (BTN ITEM 27.09) OF 13.6 MILLION KILOLITERS. IMPORTS OF PRODUCTS (27.10) WERE 3.7 MILLION KILOLITERS.

(E) SOUTH AFRICA IS BELIEVED TO HAVE SOME 350 MILLION BARRELS OF CRUDE IN STRATEGIC RESERVE (STORED IN ABANDONED MINES).

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4. CONSERVATION MEASURES ORIGINALLY POSED THE GOAL OF A 20 PERCENT FUEL SAVING, BUT REPORTEDLY AN 18 PERCENT SAVING HAS BEEN THE HIGHEST ACHIEVED - AND THAT ONLY IN THE FIRST MONTH AFTER THE CONSERVATION MEASURES WERE INTRODUCED IN NOVEMBER 1973. ACCORDING TO THE RAND DAILY MAIL FEBRUARY 25, 1974, THE CONTROLLER OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS (AND SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE), MR. JOEP STEYN, REITERATED THE NEED FOR THESE MEASURES, STATING THERE HAD BEEN A STEEP (BUT UNSPECIFIED) FALL-OFF IN FUEL
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SAVINGS SINCE THEN. GAS RATIONING AND STRICTER SPEED LIMITS WERE THREATENED. HE SAID THE NEED FOR FUEL SAVINGS REMAINED AS URGENT AS IN NOVEMBER 1973, MAINLY FOR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS REASONS. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT PRETORIA BE RELIEVED OF THE SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT PENDING THE LIFTING OF THE MILITARY SECRECY REGULATIONS ON THESE DATA, IT BEING UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WILL REPORT DEVELOPMENTS ON AN AS AVAILABLE BASIS.
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